

Ophir
Near Pinopolis
Berkeley County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-19

HABS
SC
8. Pinopolis,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of South Carolina

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office
for Southeast Unit

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS

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OPHIR

Near Pinopolis, Berkeley County, South Carolina

Owner: Santee-Cooper Hydroelectric and Navigation ProjectDate of erection: c. 1810Present condition: Good; in danger of inundationBuilder: Peter PorcherDescription:

Ophir is a large scale, two-story, gable roof house, rather barnlike in effect, which has the merit of directness, lack of affectation, and excellent trim. The exterior is the envelope of the interior without any architectural pretention. It is weatherboarded with fine cypress stock, and in the elevations are logically spaced sixteen-light windows equipped with the original paneled or louvered shutters. The huge gable is frankly treated as such, with bargeboards decorated with reeded triglyphes and lozenge paterae. This enrichment is carried across the frieze of the main cornice. The present porch has delicate tapered posts with wide overhanging eaves and a railing of closely spaced rectangular balusters. The great spreading exterior brick stairway is modern but is a type much used in this part of the State. The bellcast, or easing of the main roof at the eaves, is unusual in the area, as is the use of dormer windows. The chimney stacks are truncated with plastered neckings and capping washes.

The plan consists of a pair of equal drawing rooms in the front with an intercommunicating door, and a door to the front porch from each. These rooms have a pair of windows on each outside wall and a fireplace in the rear wall, with a door to the hall at one side. This rear hall has a stair against one wall and a pair of closets facing it. At the rear are the doors to the flanking rooms.

The interiors of Ophir are satisfying as balancing broad plastered surfaces with well considered but elaborately carved woodwork. The twin parlors each have a paneled dado, low mantel, and full cornice and frieze. The mantels are the best examples of gouged and carved work of the area, the motives being well adapted to the spaces and the execution crisply done. The pilasters are reeded, with moulded caps and bases, and the architraves are carved with grouped flutes alternating

with medallions. The mantel cornices are dentiled. There are erect oval sunbursts in the pilaster blocks and horizontal sunbursts in the key block, with quarter sunbursts filling each corner of the panels. The intervening spaces of the friezes are filled with double festoons of triple garlands of gouging. Delicate pendants and medallions are used for accents. These same motives are repeated in friezes under the main cornices and carry continuously around the room. The main cornices themselves are simply moulded with Wall of Troy dentil courses in the bed moulds. The mantels in the rear rooms are less ornate with larger scale detail.

In the elements of the design may be seen the result of native solutions for native problems. The general trimness that the house possesses in mass and detail results from logical relation of the details to the whole.

Additional data:

Peter Porcher was a brother-in-law of Peter Gaillard of The Rocks. In this relationship is probably the explanation of the use of the plan type here.

--From "A Survey of the Early Buildings in the Region of the Proposed Santee and Pinopolis Reservoirs in South Carolina" by Thomas T. Waterman

Other existing records:

Stoney, S. G., Plantations of the Carolina Low Country

Author: Thomas T. Waterman

Approved: 10/12/40

"Ophir"
Pinopolis Vicinity
Berkeley County
South Carolina

Historical Data:

"Ophir", with "Mexico", was one of the three plantations of Peter Porcher of Peru, who believed in giving his places the names of famous gold mines. Colonel Thomas Porcher, son of Peter, appears to have built "Ophir" Plantation House about 1810. The floor plan of this house is typical more of Upper than of Middle Saint John's where "Ophir" stands, as in everything but exact proportion, it is almost a replica of that used by Porcher's brother-in-law Peter Gaillard of "The Rocks".

It is interesting to note the varied use of the same motifs on the exterior cornice at "Ophir" and on that of the parlor at "The Rocks".

Moved to a new site 1941.

Bibliography:

Stoney, Samuel Gaillard - Plantations of the Carolina Low Country.

Edgely

TW 6/28/41

Addendum to:

Ophir (Colonel Thomas Porcher Plantation House)
Approximately 5 miles northwest of Pinopolis
Pinopolis Vicinity
Berkeley County
South Carolina

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